

# **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization**

## **Midtown Greenway Land Use and Transit Project**

A CONSORTIUM PROJECT OF: Augsburg College; College of St. Catherine; Hamline University; Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs; Macalester College; Metropolitan State University; Minneapolis Community College; Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program; University of Minnesota (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service); University of St. Thomas; and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.

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## **REPORT ON MIDTOWN GREENWAY RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP**

**BY GARY SHALLCROSS, RESEARCH ASST.**

**AUGUST 26, 2001**

### **CLIENT ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSE**

The client organization for this research project was the Midtown Greenway Coalition. The Coalition is a citizens organization concerned with improvement of the Midtown Greenway as a public amenity and with development along it to the extent that it contributes to or detracts from its value to a community of users and neighbors. The Board of the Coalition is composed of representatives from neighborhoods along or near the Midtown Greenway. It does not have the same recognized status as a neighborhood organization, but representatives of the Coalition do have roles on committees and study groups addressing the issues of the Greenway corridor.

### **ORIGINAL WORK PROGRAM**

The announcement for the research assistantship provided 390 hours of assistantship time to research and draft a zoning overlay ordinance to be submitted to the City Council for adoption as an amendment to the City's zoning ordinance. After an interview and discussion of the project with the Coalition's Director, Tim Springer, and Board President, Robert Corrick, I prepared a draft work program outlining steps I proposed to take to produce a draft overlay ordinance. The program included research of the City's current zoning code, similar ordinances elsewhere, site reconnaissance, text drafting, review and comment by the Coalition and City staff, redrafting, acceptance by the Coalition, and finally, submission to the City as a proposed ordinance. I have conducted all the steps outlined in the agreed upon work program except final submission to the City Council. This last step cannot be taken because an additional step of review by individual neighborhood organizations has been added as a necessary step in the review process. Also, the nature of the work product has changed and expanded to include additional documents.

The specific purpose of this project was to further the Coalition's aim to shape the Greenway corridor in a way that benefits its community. My intent as the research intern was to draw upon my knowledge of municipal government, urban planning and design, and zoning law to draft an ordinance that would translate the client's and the community's vision for the Greenway into a working policy document that would guide day to day decisions on specific development proposals. What I did not recognize was the lack of city consensus on the need for a zoning overlay, the degree of politicization within the community the issue had already aroused, and the tactical motivations that lay behind the interest in a zoning overlay ordinance.

### **PREPARATORY WORK AND INITIAL ORDINANCE DRAFTS (FEB. 1 TO JUNE 1)**

One of my first steps in gaining background information on the Greenway corridor was to request a set of maps from the City's public works GIS print room showing property lines,

building and pavement location, topography, and zoning classification. There was a technical problem in providing the zoning information on the same maps as the other information, so I got a zoning map as well and spent considerable time transferring zoning boundaries to trace paper overlays. Later, I added building locations to the overlays, but the demands of drafting and redrafting text for a ZOD (zoning overlay district) preempted time that would have been needed to prepare more detailed physical maps. In late February, I attended an evening meeting at Andersen Contemporary school on open space connections with the Greenway. I suggested the possibility of a link between zoning and open space by offering a density credit to developers in exchange for donation of land adjacent to the Greenway for open space purposes. This concept was included in all the drafts of the ZOD.

I biked the Greenway during Spring break and took numerous photographs of the public space within the completed portion of the Greenway along with adjacent land and buildings. I scanned a number of these photos and produced with Photoshop a series of panoramic views. I contacted Amy Tibbs in the Minneapolis Planning Department and was told the City's zoning ordinance could be viewed and portions printed from the City's web site. I found the process rather time consuming, however, since only a page of text could be viewed or printed at a time. Viewing the ordinance at a public library became a more efficient way of researching its contents. Knowing that it would go through a series of reviews and revisions, I prepared a draft overlay ordinance at the end of spring break and transmitted copies of it to Bob Corrick, Tim Springer, and my supervisor on the project, Eric Hart, who chairs the Land Use committee on the Coalition Board.

I received feedback from Eric in early April and redrafted the ZOD by about mid-month. This draft was also transmitted to the above three people for review and, when no comment came back by the end of the month, I transmitted - with their knowledge and consent - a copy of the draft ZOD to Amy Tibbs to gain some reaction from the City. Amy gave a copy to someone in the Development Services division of the Planning Department and met with me on May 30 to go over the ordinance and give me a copy of their marked up draft.

#### **FEEDBACK, REDRAFTS, STRATEGY ALTERATION, NEW DOCUMENTS (JUNE 1 TO JULY 19)**

In early June, I met with Eric Hart and Tim Springer at the Greenway offices to review the comments offered to the draft ZOD by City staff. To that point, I had received little input from the Coalition on the basic subject of building setback. Taking my cue from the City's zoning ordinance, I had drafted setback provisions that required non-residential buildings to be placed close enough to the Greenway and with openings on the adjacent facade to foster a sense of enclosure and eyes on the Greenway. I had recommended, however, that buildings not be allowed to wall off the Greenway entirely, but should allow openings each block so that people would not be trapped in the corridor. At this meeting, Tim Springer introduced a goal I had not heard before nor considered myself - that buildings to the south of the Greenway be set back and limited in height sufficiently to allow daylight to fall upon the pathways. (I was informed later



that this was to help melt snow and ice in winter so that the paths would be safer to move along.)

In addition to maintaining solar access to the pathways, Tim was concerned that the slopes of the Greenway be vegetated so that it would be a true *greenway* and not, as he put it, a "wall-way" with building and retaining walls enclosing the trench portion of its length. Tim wanted to achieve a vegetated embankment via a ZOD provision requiring a greater setback, so that when transit improvements in the Greenway were completed, a grassy slope rather than a retaining wall would be the transition from public to private space. An additional reason to put buildings further back was to allow room for a pedestrian promenade along the rim of the Greenway. I told Tim that using a zoning provision to reserve land for essentially a public purpose would probably be construed as a taking of private land without compensation. I informed him that recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions had severely restricted land regulation to those concerns which can be clearly related to the police power. This warning was made even more strongly by Blake Graham of the Minneapolis Planning Department in a meeting later that month.

Following some alternate direction I had received from Bob Corrick and discussions with Eric Hart, I had been working on the concept of commercial or mixed use buildings fronting along the property line shared with the Greenway and offering direct access from Greenway space to private establishments. This more urban vision of the Greenway was in keeping with the City's new zoning policy for commercial development. The emergence of competing visions - Tim's "green" vision and the other more "urban" vision - of the Greenway resulted in expanding the draft ZOD to include more complex and restrictive height and setback provisions as well as provisions offering developers incentives to relate more directly to the Greenway, and requirements for providing at-grade access wherever possible.

As the June 21st Board meeting approached, Tim and I agreed to draft alternate provisions to the setback portion of the ZOD. His eliminated an incentive for at-grade access. Mine kept it. Presented with an issue of central importance to the ZOD, Board president Bob Corrick urged the Board to table the matter and direct the Land Use Committee to hammer out a single ordinance to submit to the neighborhoods. After the board meeting, the Land Use Committee met briefly and, though appreciative of my efforts, Bob signaled his preference for going with Tim's version. My concerns regarding the takings issue were not squarely addressed, though Bob had some concern about that as well. Seeing that Tim's concerns went beyond regulation of private land to defining the Greenway space itself, I recommended that the Lake Street/ Midtown Greenway Framework Plan needed to be consulted and possibly amended to establish foundation in an adopted Plan for any recommended regulation.

The following week was when both Tim and I met with Blake Graham and Amy Tibbs at City Hall. Blake warned us that overlay ordinances needed to be limited in scope and cannot be used, in effect, to acquire land. He also informed us that a parcel by parcel review would have to be performed to ascertain all nonconformities which would result from adopting the ordinance. This

last requirement I had not foreseen though I should have. A day or two after the meeting, seeing that a conflict was inevitable and that the effort I had put into drafting most portions of the ZOD would likely come to naught if submitted in the form presently favored by the Coalition leadership, I called Amy Tibbs and asked her advice as to how she thought the matter could be better handled. She suggested something in keeping with my own planning instincts - to submit recommendations that did not properly belong in the zoning ordinance (since they dealt more with public space) in a separate document. Shortly after that I transmitted by email my read of the meeting with Blake and Amy to the rest of the Land Use Committee and suggested the need to meet and rethink strategy.

The Committee met on June 28th and the pendulum shifted back in my direction. I was asked to prepare more documents which could be used as vehicles to articulate Coalition policy objectives. By the following Monday, I was to prepare drafts of a Vision Statement, a synopsis of Plan Issues, an executive summary of the ZOD, and an annotated version of the ZOD. I did this; we met the following Monday; and the Committee adopted the "two track" approach of pursuing both a draft ZOD and a collection of policy recommendations in something I labeled an amendment to the Framework Plan, but which Bob Corrick later transformed into a statement of Goals and Objectives. My next task was to draft portions of this Goals Statement. Tim drafted portions relating to the trench widening concerns. Eric Hart went on a vacation until July 11th. We met briefly upon his return to assess where the process was at. Then, Tim went on a vacation. During Tim's absence, I worked with Bob Corrick on redrafting the documents to be considered at the Board's July 19th meeting. Bob is a semi-retired desktop publisher who can produce documents fairly rapidly. He possessed a lot of visual files on the Greenway which he captioned and combined with the text documents I had drafted. It was just prior to this that I finally released to Bob a digital copy of my latest ordinance draft and the other documents he had requested.

The Board met on July 19th and Bob, Eric, and I explained the draft documents we had prepared, including some diagrammatic sketches I had prepared to illustrate some basic provisions of the ZOD. The Board discussion was friendly, if at times challenging. I fielded more and more questions as the discussion proceeded. Considerable attention was focused on the need to refer to Nature in the Vision Statement and to the "spatial envelope" provision of the ZOD which I had drafted to combine building setback and height concerns. At the conclusion, it seemed a fair degree of consensus had been achieved. The Board approved the draft documents in concept with a few specific revisions. After the meeting, Bob and I went back to work fine tuning the documents to address the Board's concerns and make them ready for review by neighborhood groups.

#### **ISSUES OF PROCESS (JULY 20 TO AUGUST 16)**

It was out of this document revision process, unfortunately, that I came to have significant

disagreement with the client organization - or at least, the organization president - over process. After a fair amount of thought and effort had been put into preparing documents I had considered to be *proposals* to those with authority to make policy and approve or disapprove developments or improvement programs, I found suddenly inserted at the top of the Vision and Goals statements introductory remarks which announced the documents as guides to developers, policy makers, and other stakeholders in making design or evaluation decisions about land within and along the Greenway. The documents were soon to be posted on the Coalition's web site. Transmission of the documents to the City and County as proposals would be done after review by the neighborhoods and consultations with members of the City Council and the County Board.

In a series of emails to Bob Corrick and copied to the Land Use Committee, I objected to this end around approach and suggested that it could wind up being counterproductive in at least two ways. It could be viewed by the staffs of the City and County as a hostile maneuver and result in their unwillingness to be forthcoming in discussions of these policy topics. Secondly, if a developer spent money or decided not to spend money on the basis of the appearance of a policy being in place when in reality it was only a proposal, the loss of money, time, or potential profits resulting from the confusion could be the basis of a lawsuit. I also objected because I felt many of the ideas I had drafted overlapped with those of the adopted Framework Plan. I had not intended to use them to usurp the role of the Framework Plan, but to add to it. Now, my work was being hijacked by my client to do something of questionable legality and my professional future could be severely damaged if this trojan horse effort went forward.

My fears were not allayed when, a few weeks later, in a phone conversation with Tim Springer and Eric Hart regarding text revisions to the ZOD and other documents, Tim voiced the need to say somehow that the Vision and Goal Statements were proposed policies "without making it obvious they have no teeth" (no actual authority). In other words, Tim did not want those developing land along the Greenway to see a clear picture, unless it was the picture he wanted them to see. The driving motivation Tim Springer and Bob Corrick have had from the beginning, as I now see it, is to gain control of development policy pertaining to the Greenway, whether or not the City government can or will adopt it. While I fully support the involvement of citizen groups in the formulation of policies that affect them, I do not condone vigilantism, web-based or otherwise; and I certainly do not want to lend my own efforts to any who resort to such tactics. If policy is going to consist of whatever is shouted loudest, we will lose the order and legitimacy that policy must indicate to be effective in the affairs of people. As a result of my open opposition to the approach taken by the Coalition's leadership, my work during this last period has been limited to providing graphic illustrations and explanatory text of spatial provisions in the draft ZOD and Goals Statement. I have not been invited to any board meetings since this disagreement arose and frankly I do not wish to assist this effort further if the Coalition leadership continues to act in the manner I've witnessed over the last six weeks.

## CONCLUSIONS

The right of petition is recognized in the U.S. Constitution. It is an important means for citizens in a democracy to make the government their own. Even though all petitions are not granted, they contribute important communication between the electorate and the elected. In the period since World War II, we have witnessed a citizenry empowered by education and personal transportation seek increasingly to free themselves from oppressive local government by moving out of cities into suburbs and out of suburbs into exurbs. We have also seen the rise of citizen organizations formed around individual policy issues or defense of very local interests. This fragmentation of interest and consequent social friction, however, are present from the creation of this country. The genius of America is that it founded a form of government which allows such rival interests to coexist and to operate in a reasonably orderly manner to distill community consensus and make policy. In doing so, it should seek the highest, not the lowest, common denominator. The observation I would offer at the conclusion of my role in this project is that policy can only be policy if adopted by those authorized by constitutional process to make it. Since adoption of policy is the ultimate end of an orderly process of citizen participation, all actions in the development of policy options must take this reality into account and responsible efforts should be oriented to reaching this end. This is not to indicate any limit to the expression of ideas. It is simply a recognition of what must be a shared understanding in order for citizen communication to be truly effective.

I should make clear that, while I have worked with all the insight my education and experience give me and have offered my best advice to the Midtown Greenway Coalition concerning its pursuit of land use policy, I do not entirely share all the particular desires for the Greenway held by the Coalition leadership and Board. The Coalition leadership shares certain articles of faith concerning the Greenway, including a preference for two way rail transit over a busway, an aversion to retaining walls, and naturally melted pathways in winter. These and other Coalition preferences will cost many millions of dollars to realize. As a Minneapolis resident who does not live near or own land adjacent to the Greenway, I must question whether investing my tax dollars to realize these preferences will not require the sacrifice of other city improvements I consider more worthwhile, more essential, and probably less costly per person served.

I am no longer convinced that transit of any kind is a worthwhile investment in the Greenway corridor. The corridor does not link major destinations. Those who use transit in the corridor will generally have to transfer to another line to reach their destination. Projected ridership is not as high per dollar of investment as for an alternate route into downtown from Hopkins. And, what will the impact of the Greenway transit line be on transit-oriented development along Lake Street, the real commercial spine of the south side? In a time when there are still boarded up storefronts on this historic street, is it not appropriate to focus commercial development along the existing street and work to make the Greenway a good open space link and neighborhood amenity? Why does it have to do everything? Perhaps because of ISTEA. Transit must be included in the Greenway improvement program because the land was acquired with transit

funds. This is probably a case of local improvement priorities being driven by a funding source rather than rational assessment of community needs and land suitability. Perhaps the true believers are right after all. Or, perhaps what the true believers believe above all is in getting money. That isn't what Horace Cleveland's vision for Minneapolis and its Grand Round were based on.

#### ATTACHMENTS

VISION STATEMENT

URBAN DESIGN GOALS

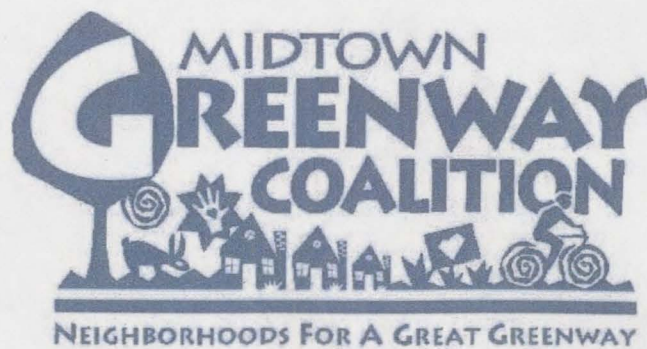
ANNOTATED ZONING OVERLAY ORDINANCE

EXHIBITS

MEMORANDA



**Midtown Greenway Urban Design  
Vision Statement**  
August 16, 2001 Draft





# Midtown Greenway Urban Design Vision Statement

August 16, 2001 Draft

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Vision Statement is to provide a basis for developers, neighborhoods, and elected/appointed officials to evaluate and design real estate development and other proposed physical changes in and alongside the Midtown Greenway corridor. This document was created by the Midtown Greenway Coalition as an advisory piece to represent community interests with all parties, including public agencies with a role in implementing the Greenway or nearby developments. This Vision Statement is also meant to guide more specific policies to follow.

**Introduction:** The Midtown Greenway is a continuous spatial element that traverses the South side of Minneapolis. A rail corridor built in 1916, it has tended to divide the land on either side.

Numerous bridges and crossings have been built to overcome this barrier. Nevertheless, its form and function have continued to impede movement across it.

The Midtown Greenway is part of a 100 year-old vision. In the 1880's, Minneapolis began knitting natural spaces together by means of a continuous linear park system thanks to the efforts of the first Minneapolis Park Board President, Charles Loring, and landscape architect Horace W. S. Cleveland. And, in 1920, a Park System Plan drawn up by Theodore Wirth included a crosstown parkway just south of Lake Street.

Now, the Greenway space promises to be something it has never been before: a place for human beings to enjoy nature and green space in an urban environment, an element of connection rather than separation in the landscape. By converting the use of the space from freight movement to a transit, bicycle, and pedestrian corridor, the Greenway now serves to bring together the very people that it previously divided. The Greenway is multifaceted in performing its function of community connection. The Greenway is:

- A transit link.
- A connection with nature.
- An open space link.
- A seam within the landscape to be enjoyed
- A social space.
- A place for gathering.
- A place of business.
- An amenity to adjacent sites.
- A neighbor.
- A connection to history.
- A forum for artistic expression.

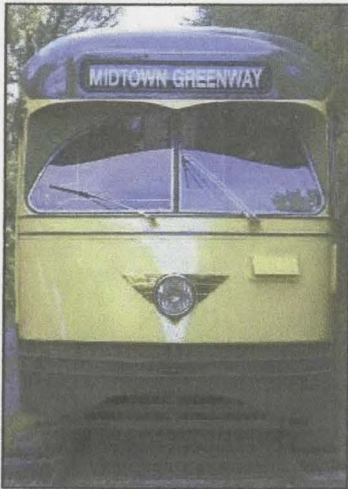


The Greenway will connect two of the region's most important natural resources, the Chain of Lakes and the Mississippi River.





**Elements of Vision:** The Coalition's vision of the Greenway interweaves many elements of the urban experience into a harmonious whole:



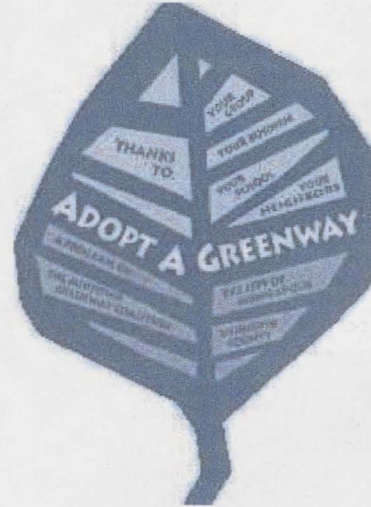
**Transit is an essential component of the Greenway vision when it harmoniously and thoughtfully compliments other elements of the vision.**

***The Greenway is a transit link.*** The Greenway will connect transit users to immediate destinations, but also provide a juncture between private and public means of transportation. Transit will connect area residents to bus and LRT service to Downtown, the University, and other destinations to both north and south. If the right form of transit and vehicles are selected, such as vintage trolleys operating on tracks in the grass rather than a busway, and it is implemented mindfully, such as with grassy slopes rather than concrete retaining walls, then transit can compliment rather than undermine the beauty and livability of the neighborhoods.

***The Greenway is a connection with nature.*** The Greenway will connect people to natural water bodies, to a pathway bounded increasingly by natural elements, and to the natural experience of traveling by means of the exertion of one's own body.

***The Greenway is an open space link.*** The bike and pedestrian trails within the Greenway will extend the system of "green infrastructure" known as the Grand Round. By connecting the chain of lakes with the Mississippi River through the middle of south Minneapolis, neighborhoods within the heart of the city will have a direct connection to these natural water bodies from which the city gained its name.

***The Greenway is a seam within the landscape.*** As a corridor unplugged by traffic conflicts and providing ample space for pedestrian and bicycle movement, the Greenway gives adjacent neighborhoods a safe place through which to move for relaxation, recreation, or to reach nearby destinations.



**The Adopt-A-Greenway Program provides a link to the Greenway as a social space connecting residents, businesses, and community organizations to the corridor and its diverse neighborhoods.**





***The Greenway is a social space.*** Once in the Greenway, people can informally meet, talk, travel to adjacent establishments or spaces to work, shop, learn, and interact. The Greenway encourages diverse neighborhoods, businesses, and governments to work together towards a common goal.

**The August 12, 2000 Grand Opening, shown here, demonstrated the capacity of the Greenway as place for social gathering.**



***The Greenway is a place for gathering.*** In addition to informal social contact, The Greenway also affords the opportunity for group gathering within adjacent open spaces for recreation, relaxation, and artistic expression.

***The Greenway is a place of business.*** Many commercial and industrial properties abut the Greenway. At present, the buildings on these properties face public streets and turn their backs to the Greenway. Over time, it is hoped, many of these buildings will establish a connection and orientation to the Greenway that will inform people of their relative location and in some cases offer goods and services for sale. In a consumer society, the experience of transaction has come to represent fulfillment of some desires and aspirations. In the Greenway, this experience will focus on what can be enjoyed on site or carried home by a pedestrian, transit patron, or cyclist.



**The Greenway is an amenity** to adjacent sites. As a place in which positive experience and connection are increasingly possible, the Greenway should be viewed as a public amenity that merits greater private investment in adjacent sites and in their orientation to the Greenway space.

**The Greenway is a neighbor.** While no one will reside in the Greenway itself, many people will live along its edge. Perhaps the most important reality to be considered in the design and function of the Greenway is its obligation to be an asset rather than a liability for its neighbors. This means appropriate lighting, limiting noise, fumes, odors, etc. that may be emitted by transit vehicles, providing safe entrances and exits, frequent crossings, and emergency services when needed.



**The Greenway is an amenity to be enjoyed by all residents of the region.** This rendering depicts potential award winning mixed income housing on the Greenway at Bloomington Ave. S.



**History adds a rich dimension to the Greenway vision.** Photograph of Greenway construction in 1918 provided courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

**The Greenway is a connection to history.** Architecture, transit, art, and other cultural amenities should compliment the historical perspective of the corridor.

**The Greenway is a forum for artistic expression.** Art projects, reflecting the culture, history, and physical make-up of the community, are expected to represent an important aspect of the Greenway development. For example, as 45 aging bridges along the Greenway are replaced during the coming years, new art bridges may be constructed.



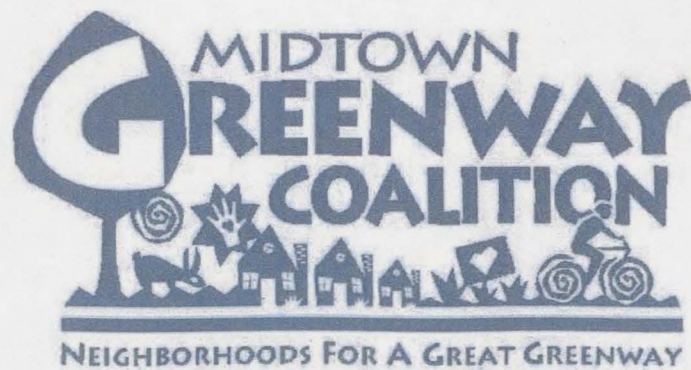
The art shown here on the Greenway under the bridge at Fourth Ave. S., is part of a large group of faces sculpted of local residents. Artistic expression represents an integral component of the Greenway vision.





**Midtown Greenway  
Urban Design Goals**

August 16, 2001 Draft





# Midtown Greenway Urban Design Goals

August 16, 2001 Draft

## Executive Summary

The Midtown Greenway Urban Design Goals seek to define the basic mission of the Greenway. The basic purposes of the Greenway are for recreation and transit. It will function as a means of connection between destinations and neighborhoods. As a public space, the Greenway is an amenity, which must both address its mission and enhance long term investment in the surrounding community through sensitive design. To realize these purposes, development of the corridor should fulfill the following requirements:

### Greenway Functions:

- *Two Way Rail Transit* on the south side of the Greenway with stops at intervals appropriate to meet neighborhood transit demand.
- *Bicycle and pedestrian ways* on the north side of the Greenway of sufficient capacity to allow free flow of bicycle traffic.

### Spatial Standards:

- Install a **vegetated embankment** on the South side of the Greenway at a **slope of 1:2** (26 degrees) from the south edge of the transit space
- *Retaining walls*, which reflect noise, block or narrow sight lines, and impede access detract from the open space character of the Greenway and **should be avoided**.
- *Maintain Solar access and sight lines* for users in the Greenway as development occurs by requiring structures to observe height limitations.
- *Widen the trench and create additional access routes* to the Greenway for the following purposes:
  - Decrease slope steepness
  - Provide more width of the trench floor
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Street should be narrowed or vacated
  - Intermittent open space for pocket parks or other public space

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

- *A continuous pedestrian promenade* at street level should be provided along the entire trench section of the Greenway along at least one side of the Greenway.
- *More pedestrian access points*, such as artful stairs and ramps, should be constructed as development occurs, perhaps as much as every block (in addition to major access points designed by the county)
- *Avoid vehicular access* along the rim of the Greenway. (29<sup>th</sup> Street should be vacated or narrowed to one lane.)
- **Placemaking Opportunities**  
*Human scale development* should enhance the Greenway by creating plaza's, vistas, and attractive architecture that use and face the corridor as an urban amenity.
- *Transit-oriented development* in the vicinity of transit stops should place residential units and as many conveniences as possible within walking distance to minimize the use of automobiles and parking lots and the resulting detriment to the environment.
- *Important junctions* of local traffic and transit with the Greenway create both social activity and real estate value. Sensitive treatment of such spaces can lead to positive rather than negative experience.

### **Human Values and the Urban Form**

- ***Safety:*** Projects that reduce vehicular crossing of the Greenway and improve sight lines, for example, should be encouraged.
- ***Health:*** Projects that promote noise and vehicular pollution, for example, should be avoided.
- ***Quality of the Experience:*** Unattractive architecture, such as traditional parking ramps, should be avoided.
- ***Legibility:*** Architecture, landscaping and signs should give Greenway occupants a sense of orientation in the space.
- ***Beauty and Art:*** Appropriate planting, art, and building materials should adorn exterior space along the corridor.
- ***History:*** Architecture, art and transit should compliment the history and culture of the community.

### **Unresolved Issues:**

- *Pedestrian access* across the transit tracks
- *Treatment of the Southern bank* of the trench either as a green space to be enjoyed primarily as a visual experience, or integrated with the Greenway through Southern pedestrian access and architecture extending to the Greenway floor.





## Purpose of Urban Design Goals

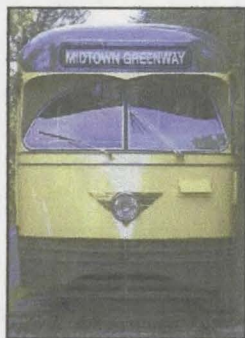
The primary purpose of this Goal statement is to articulate to elected/appointed officials, developers, planners, and other stakeholders essential elements of the community's vision for the Midtown Greenway Corridor. In addition to identifying the basic functions of the Greenway itself, it recommends guidelines for adjacent real estate development. Adoption of the policies contained in this goal statement by the City of Minneapolis and the Hennepin county Regional Railroad Authority is intended to form the basis for the Midtown Greenway Zoning Overlay District.

### Corridor Purpose

In the future, the Midtown Greenway will be an open space link through which people rather than freight will move. As expressed in the Vision Statement, it is *a place for human beings*, an element of *connection* rather than separation in the landscape. The Greenway corridor should provide a continuous bike/pedestrian/ transit way for both recreational and transportation purposes. While it is a functional and recreational amenity to neighboring areas, it should also be a visual amenity that will enhance the value of neighboring property. To be an amenity, it must be safe, functional, and beautiful, not a sink for nuisances such as noise, litter, and environmental hazards, loading docks, garbage dumpsters, and parking facilities.



### Transit Mode/Service Level



**A vintage trolley would provide both mass transit and ambiance on the Greenway.**

Photograph courtesy of Patrick Fox Photography.



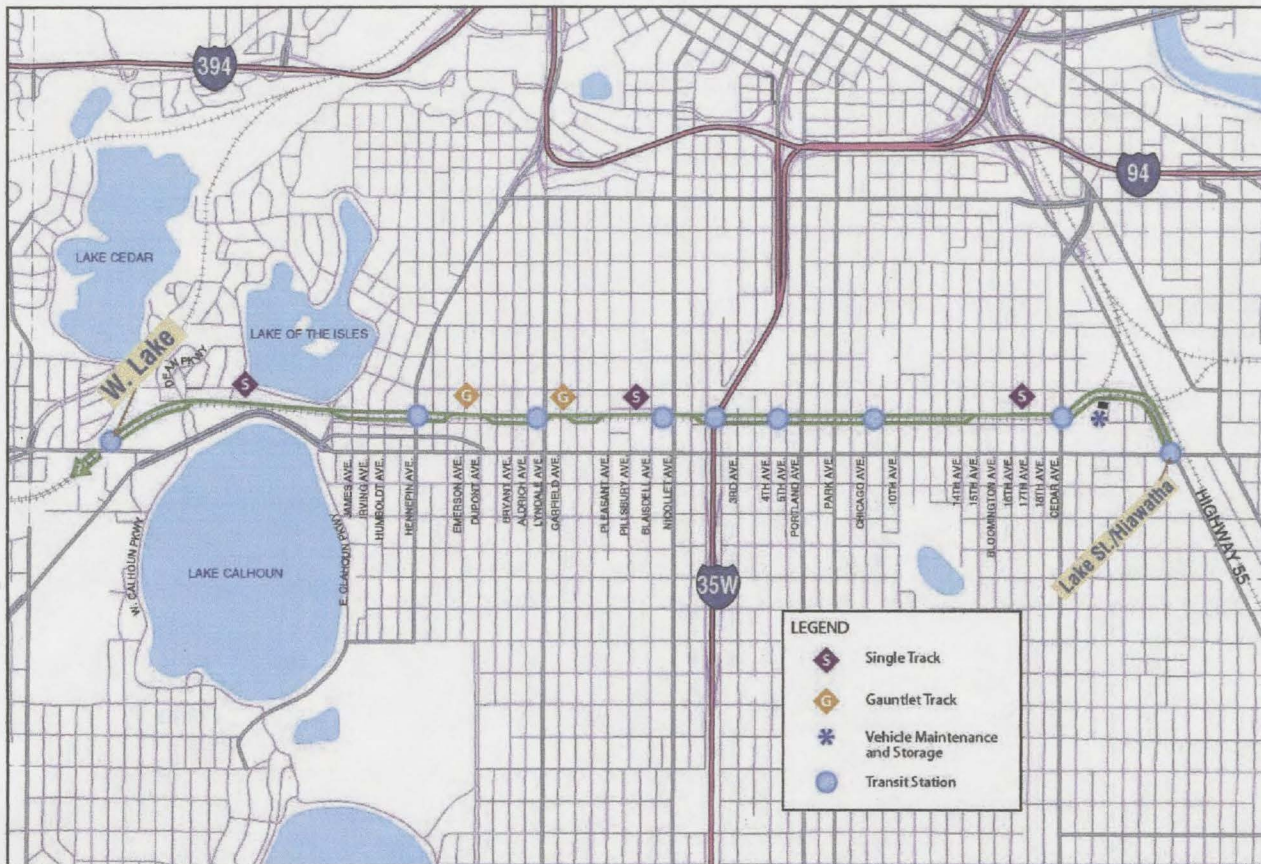
Future development along the Midtown Greenway should anticipate mass transit which is not invasive to the neighborhoods in the form of passenger rail (vintage trolley or LRT) operating on a dedicated set of tracks for each direction of travel. New developments should anticipate a wider corridor to allow for a double-track in the future. Discussion of transit should include consensus about station locations and planning at these locations to afford access, increased land utilization, and integrated public space.



**Grass between the tracks in Kenosha, Wisconsin provides a park-like setting for rail transit.** Photograph courtesy of Lomarado Group.

Urban Design Goals  
August 16, 2001 Draft





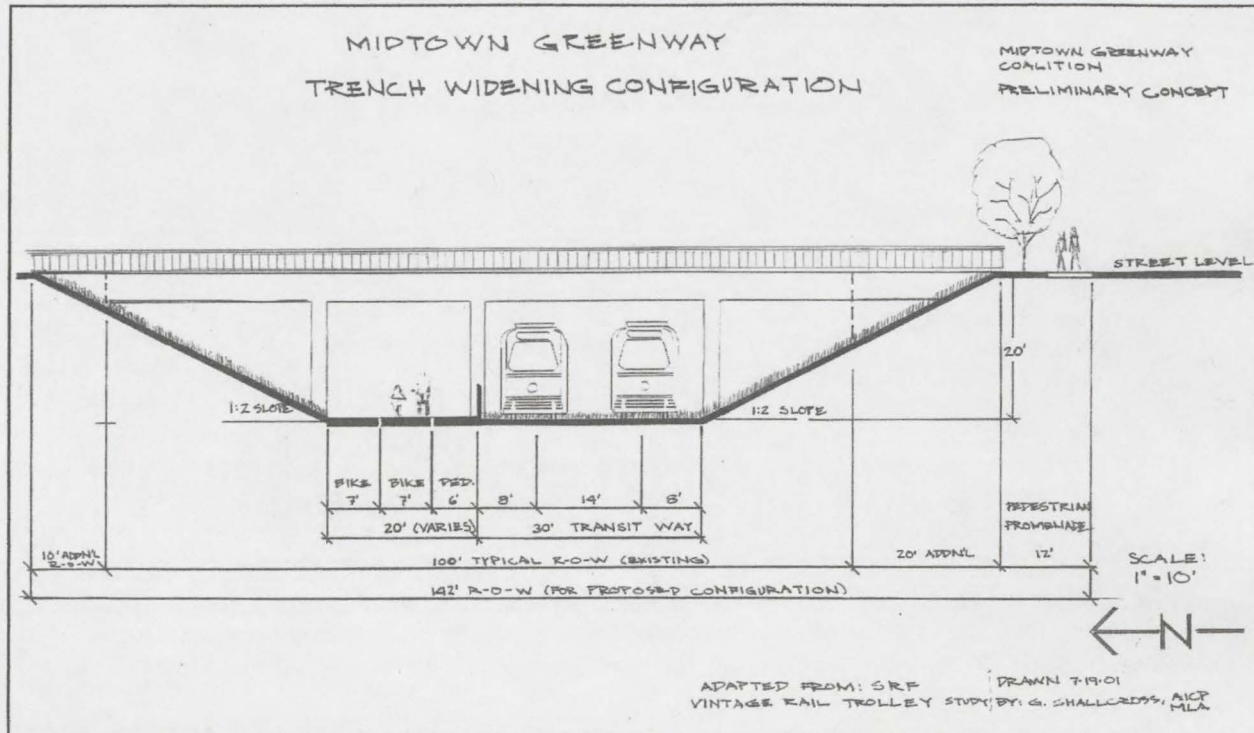
**Greenway development should anticipate agreed-upon transit stops, access, and related public space. Proposed station locations as shown above should be discussed by surrounding communities. Base map provided courtesy of Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and the Metropolitan Council.**

## Spatial Standards

**Movement Space:** The Greenway must accommodate movement of transit vehicles and bicycle and pedestrian ways for most of its length. On the South side, rail transit lines in both directions will require approximately 30 feet of lateral space. On the North side, a pedestrian way 6 feet in width and two bicycle lanes of 7 feet each add up to a total of 20 feet. Thus, the total lateral space needed for all modes of movement comprehended within the Greenway will generally be 50 feet. (This point is covered in more detail below.)



**Flat Slope and Vegetated Embankment:** Unless development is built from the floor of the Greenway, a vegetated embankment at a slope of 1:2 (vertical to horizontal) should be installed wherever possible between the outer edge of the movement lanes and the right-of-way line (the boundary of the Greenway). This rule of thumb should be observed when the corridor is modified and development projects are considered. The additional land required for this configuration is justified on grounds that a vegetated embankment will absorb sound, shade asphalt paths in summer, and signify through the presence of organic plant forms that the Greenway lives up to its name. A vegetated embankment is also easier to climb to escape danger than a vertical retaining wall.

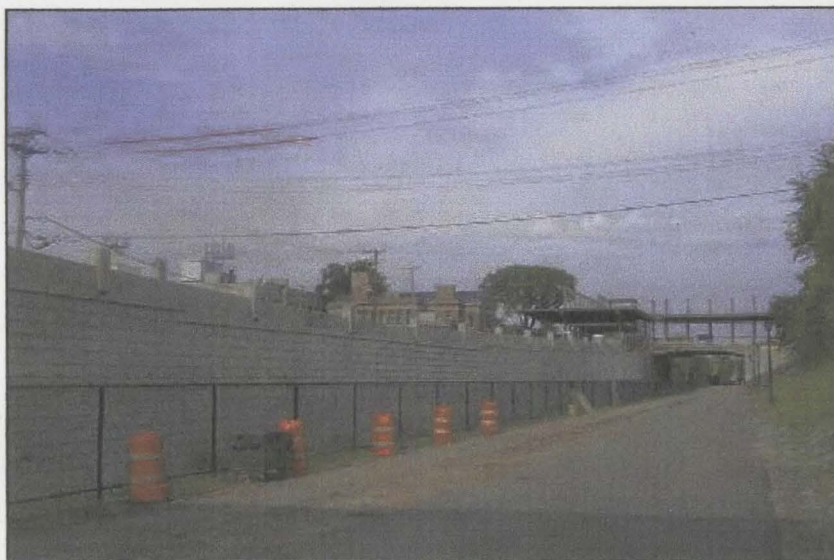


A 2:1 slope would require widening of the trench in many parts of the Greenway. The drawing above illustrates that 20 additional feet would be required on the South side in addition to 12 feet for a pedestrian promenade. An additional 10 feet would be required on the North side in this example. The actual number of feet required in order to accomplish a 2:1 slope will vary depending upon the specific dimensions in the trench.

**Minimize retaining walls** If and when the trench segment of the corridor is widened to accommodate increasing use at the trench floor (such as two transit tracks) the corridor should be widened by pushing the vegetated embankment further south rather than replacing it with a retaining wall. This keeps the Greenway green and pleasant, and offers greater visual and physical access from the street level.

Greenway developments should open up rather than close off the Greenway. Walls should be avoided because they:

- close in the visual space, cutting off views of the surrounding city
- are usually aesthetically unappealing
- reduce the potential for access and integration with the surrounding urban space
- undermine needed feelings of personal safety
- reduce the possibilities for greenery
- tend to reflect rather than absorb noise, and retain heat.



**Walls significantly undermine the  
ambiance of the Greenway.  
Future Greenway development  
should avoid them.**

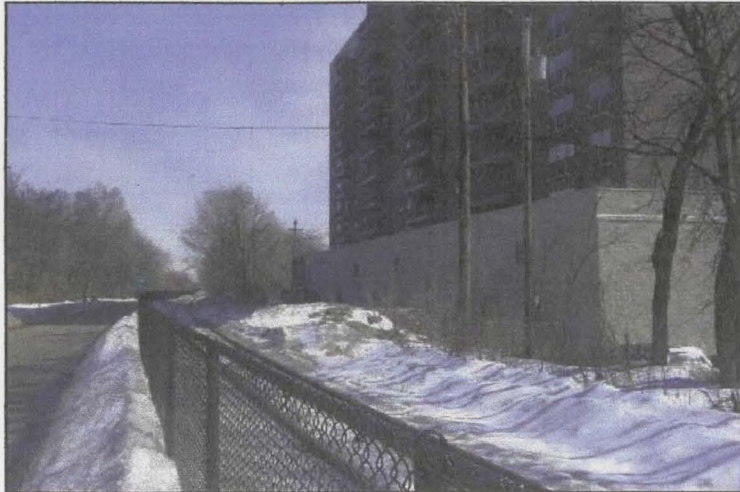


**The trench portion of the Greenway presents a closed-in feeling to many users.**



**Reducing the slope of the trench whenever possible would provide significant visual and emotional relief. The Soo Line Gardens, shown here for example, demonstrate the value of reduced slope in the trench.**

Maintain Solar Access: In order to keep the cycling and walking trails in the sunshine on winter days for reasons of user livability and safety (light for visibility and to melt snow and ice on the trails), solar access should not be permanently blocked by structures. The Zoning Overlay Ordinance should contain provisions to control the height and placement of structures on land parcels south of the Greenway in order to maintain daylight on the bicycle and pedestrian pathways.



Calhoun Beach Club Apartments are pictured to the left in the wintertime. No consideration for solar access on the Greenway was given by this project.

Trench Widening: In order to avoid a walled-in corridor in the future as more space is needed or desired on the trench floor for transit, additional right-of-way should be acquired as necessary. This widening is needed for a number of important purposes, including:

- Decreasing slope steepness.
- Providing more width of the trench floor on the south side for transit. This will require, in general, about 30 feet south of the corridor centerline for transit, and about another 40 feet south of that to allow for a slope at a 2:1 grade.
- 29th Street should be narrowed to one lane or vacated in order to flatter the slope.
- At selected locations where public open space is sought by the surrounding community.

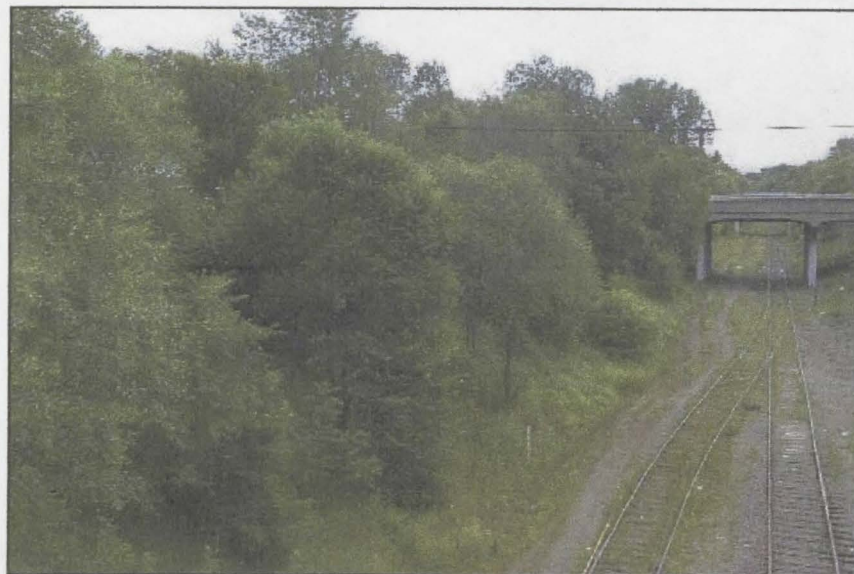
This widening of the corridor may not be accomplished with a Zoning Overlay District because it may be tantamount to the taking of land, space that would be part of the Greenway right-of-way and not usable to private landowners. Therefore this may have to be implemented through other means such as easements, land purchases, or as a last resort, condemnations





Widening the trench floor in strategic areas represents an excellent way to enhance the trench. The rendering to the left shows Bloomington Avenue with creative landscaping and development.

Bloomington Avenue at present is pictured to the right.





## Pedestrian Circulation

Mobility should be provided along the rim of the trench segments at the elevation of the surrounding streets, via a pedestrian promenade. This can be on one side or the other, or perhaps on both sides. The purpose of this is for continuous physical access between entrance ramps and to increase visual access to discourage crime and establish the Greenway as a public place similar to a public lakefront. Additional vehicular access parallel to the Greenway should be avoided, and removing some of the existing roadways framing the Greenway should be pursued, making them a combination of green space and bike/ped ways. Stairs and other accesses should be provided as frequently as possible between formal county-sanctioned access points. As a rule, the construction of pedestrian accesses to the Greenway will enhance its functionality, safety, and overall enjoyment by the community.

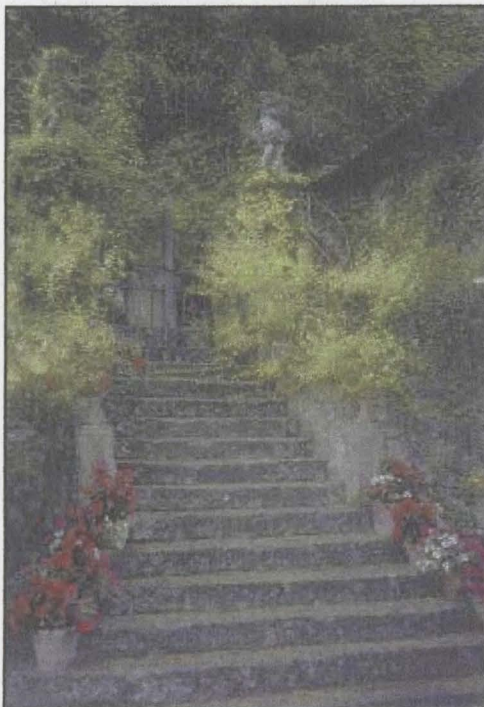


Public pedestrian access on the rim of the Greenway should be an objective of development in the Corridor. The Urban Village development, shown above, proposed West of Lyndale on the North side of the Greenway has plans for such a promenade. Initially, the developer had proposed a street in place of the promenade, a feature that should be avoided in Greenway development. The missed opportunity with Urban Village, based on the Coalition's Urban Design Goals, was greater integration of the project with the Greenway through access, landscaping, and architecture. Rendering provided courtesy of Close Landscape Architecture.





**More access to the Greenway should be pursued. Not all access needs to be highly engineered, such as this access point at Bryant Ave. S., the current standard in the Greenway.**



**Developers should consider alternative means of access to the Greenway. (ADA, of course, must be considered. Nearby ramps could satisfy ADA requirements, and stairs could add alternative routes for pedestrians.)**

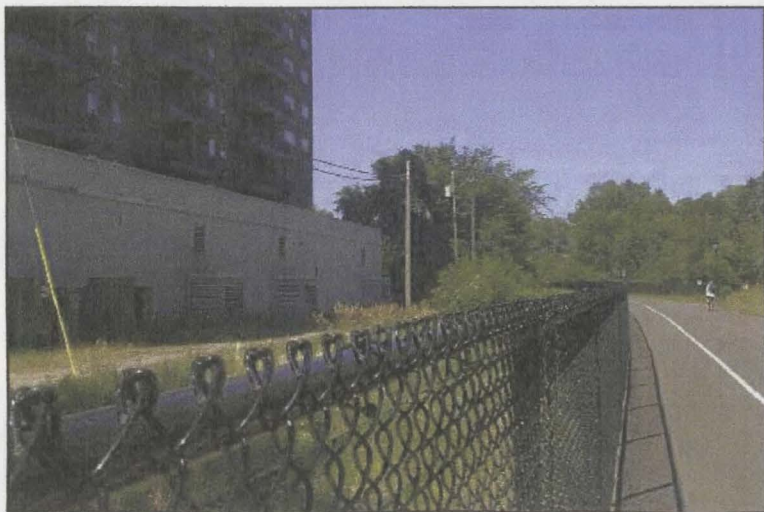




29<sup>th</sup> Street should be narrowed to one lane, or vacated, and redesigned to widen the Greenway and encourage pedestrian circulation. The picture to the left shows Colfax Ave. S., looking East on 29<sup>th</sup> Street, where 29<sup>th</sup> Street could be narrowed, the existing sidewalk moved from the South to the North side of the street, and integrated with the Greenway. 29<sup>th</sup> Street will be rebuilt in future years as the street deteriorates. This low-traffic street presents a good opportunity for thoughtful planning of improved pedestrian circulation and openness in the Greenway.

### Placemaking Opportunities

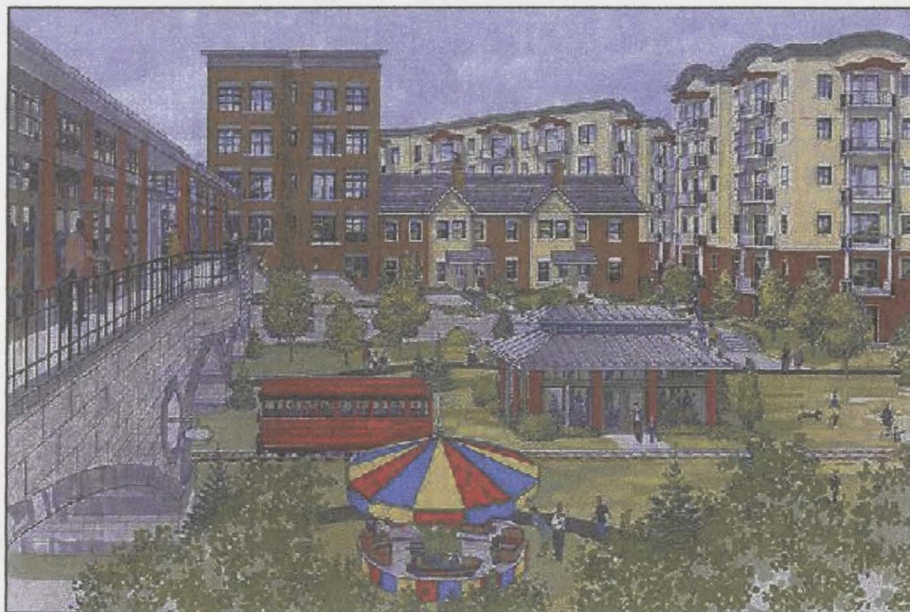
Whether the adjacent land use is industrial, commercial, residential or open space, the interface between private realm and public realm should be shaped to reinforce the amenity value of the Greenway. Rather than continuous, blank walls, adjacent sites and buildings should open up to the Greenway, providing visual contact through attractive windowed facades (especially at the ground level), opportunities for access, and adjoining activity spaces that mesh well with the pedestrian and transit circulation within the Greenway. These adjoining spaces are people places and private vehicles should not be present. Where parking, loading, storage, trash, or mechanical equipment is present in adjacent yards, full, effective screening should be provided.



Although recently constructed, the Calhoun Beach Club Apartments does not accomplish the placemaking goal. The building does not use the same materials and design on the back as on the front, has no access or window treatment on the ground floor of the rear façade, and has loud garage fans facing the Greenway. The ground floor Greenway side of the building is clearly designed as the rear of the building, with no connection to the Greenway as a linear park.



Most important in designing or redesigning adjacent sites is the recognition that the space outside of building walls is an entity itself, an outdoor room that needs a degree of enclosure to define it, functional arrangement to make it useful, and material adornments that make it inviting and habitable. In an urban context, exterior space cannot be thought of as a buffer zone to establish autonomy, but rather as a medium through which each property addresses its civic responsibility, its *place* in the community. An intentional orientation to the public realm must replace attitudes of negligence, exclusion, disengagement and NIMBYism.



The redevelopment of Nicollet Avenue at the Greenway, proposed by Sherman Associates, is perhaps the first example of a development to promote a sense of place in the Greenway. The rendering to the left faces the Greenway to the South, with apartments adjoining Nicollet Avenue, on a bridge over the Greenway, to the left.

Rendered by Michael T. Elavsk compliments of DJR Architecture, Inc.

Although built with modest construction materials, this development at Lyndale Avenue, showing the August 2000 Grand Opening of the Greenway, is a good example of opening a building up to the corridor, creating a sense of space.







Buildings at the level of the Greenway floor are desirable. This residential development between Bloomington and 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. S., proposed by DJR Architects, Inc., is a good example. Plan provided compliments of DJR Architecture, Inc.



Homes directly facing the Greenway should be strongly encouraged. This picture shows a neighbor's beautiful landscaping and home on the Greenway at Irving Ave. S.



## Human Values and Urban Form

In designing and evaluating design of the Greenway and adjacent sites, that which is appropriate for human well being should be considered first and foremost. The most important consideration must be *safety*. Safety requires accessibility both into and out of the Greenway. It requires visibility by preserving access to daylight and sight lines. It also requires that noise levels be controlled so that someone in the Greenway can hear things approaching and be heard when crying for assistance.

A second major consideration is *health*. The presence of waste, noise, odor, fumes, harmful insects or vermin must be eliminated as much as possible so that the Greenway and spaces along it are not in any way hazardous to human health.

A third consideration extends to activities and structures which detract from the experience of being in the Greenway (including open parking lots, loading docks, storage yards, trash disposal, air handling and other equipment, production processes, etc.). While the threshold of what constitutes a public nuisance must allow for reasonable use of land, it must also protect the *quality* of experience within the Greenway, lest the considerable investment in this public space become compromised.



Buildings, no matter how utilitarian in nature, should not detract from the visual experience of the Greenway. Parking ramps, loading docks, air-handling equipment, etc. should be avoided. If parking ramps are absolutely necessary, such structures should be built underground, or beautified with attractive facades and artful treatment. This parking ramp in Arles, France (rare to see above ground in old central French cities), is a good example of an artful parking structure, integrated with landscaping.



While avoiding the bad is important, it is not enough. Spaces and structures must be designed to order and shape space so that it is *legible* to pedestrians. People within the Greenway must be able to determine their location, the distance and route to destinations, and the presence of potential conflicts, such as at intersections. The scale and proportion of spaces and structures should be designed in appropriate relationship to the stature, visual comprehension, and movement of human beings. Superhuman objects and distances overwhelm human perception and leave the individual in a position of insignificance, disjointed from the scale of the spatial environment. This should be avoided.

A further positive consideration is *beauty*. While difficult to define in any universal sense, beauty of the physical environment is commonly recognized as a public good. In addition to a spatial framework of a scale and proportion that resonates with human stature, the presence of natural materials (e.g. stone as opposed to concrete, trees and shrubs as opposed to endless pavement, etc.) brings complexity and contrast to the built environment and stimulates visual interest and pleasure. By the same token, formulaic approaches to site and building design - of whatever type - are deadening. The design review process should not stifle design creativity, but should take into account the design principles of the Framework Plan and the judgment of community members as to the compatibility of proposed development with its surroundings. All developments on the Greenway should be encouraged to build art projects in yards facing the Greenway.

**Real estate development should consider the historic nature of the corridor. Building renovations and new design should be sensitive to the architectural context in the corridor. A vintage rail trolley would compliment the historical perspective of the corridor.**



### Implementation Strategies

Bringing this vision for the Midtown Greenway to fruition will require continued neighborhood involvement working with elected officials and public agencies. The zoning overlay district is needed as soon as possible to avoid a continuing tendency to treat the Greenway as a back door rather than an opportunity for beautiful Placemaking. An Urban Design Plan should be completed as part of the overlay process. A capital improvements plan will help long-range budgeting and fundraising, especially as related to lateral expansions of the public right of way as needed for parks, transit, and better physical integration with surrounding communities. Engineering and implementation of mass transit is needed to enliven the corridor and will stimulate additional developments consistent with this Urban Design Plan.

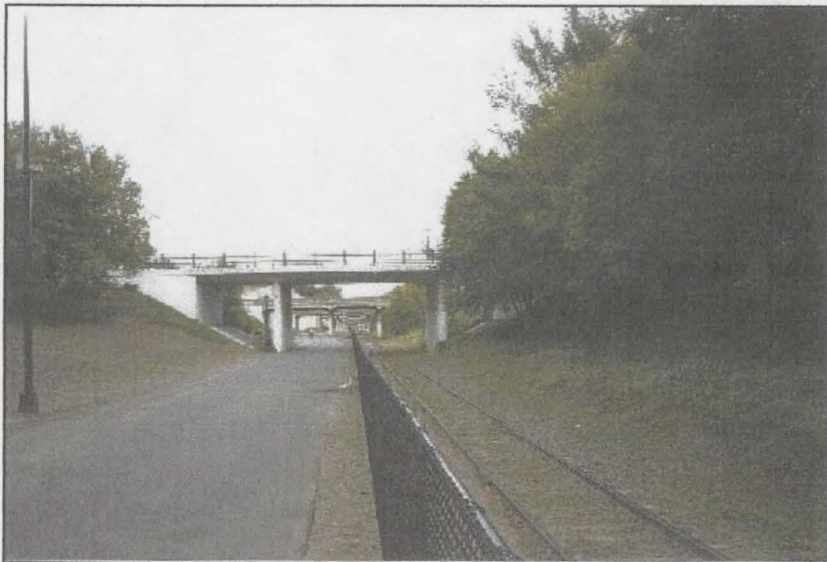


## Issues to Be Resolved

In addition to access from the north side as frequently as possible, perhaps every block, should there also be an emphasis on more frequent access from the south side across the transit tracks than would be allowed at just the transit stops? Should the South bank, in the trench portion of the Greenway, emphasize visual green space at the expense of access and architectural treatment.

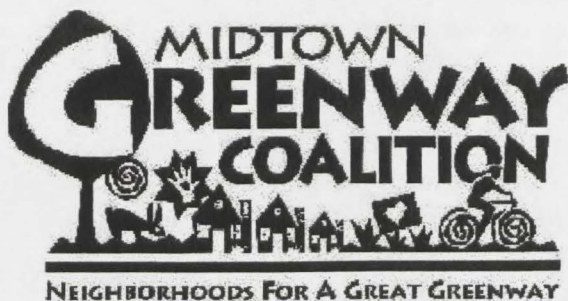


There are many opportunities to create access to the South of the Greenway, even though this would require crossing transit tracks. Is Southern access to be pursued? An example is the strong neighborhood support for Southern access at Calhoun Village, pictured to the left, facing South from the Greenway. Calhoun Village also presents an excellent opportunity to open the back of a shopping center to the Greenway. La Toscana Ristorante, for example, located in the front of the left building pictured here, has considered adding a patio restaurant to the back of the building facing the Greenway.



Another unresolved issue is the treatment of the South bank of the trench. Since transit tracks limit access, should the South bank serve primarily as visual green space to be viewed by Greenway users? Alternatively, a variety of treatments could be designed into the slope, including usable rather than just viewable green space, Greenway floor development such as buildings with doors at the pathway elevation, and pedestrian access.





## Midtown Greenway Zoning Overlay District Annotated Version August 16, 2001 Draft

**Executive Summary:** The Zoning Overlay District for the Midtown Greenway is proposed by the Midtown Greenway Coalition as a set of policies to guide and shape development along the edge of the

Greenway to reinforce and enhance the character and purpose of the Greenway space. That character and purpose is described in the attached Vision Statement.

The MGZOD contains 10 sections that describe the area covered, require informed design review by interested citizens, establish limitations on uses, and delineate what may be built where relative to the Greenway right-of-way. The ordinance's provisions are briefly summarized below:

**SECTION I. PURPOSE** - recognizes that the Greenway is a unique investment in community connection that must be protected by appropriate control of adjacent development.

**SECTION II. BOUNDARIES** - defines the area subject to control.

**SECTION III. DEFINITIONS** - explains terms which have particular relevance to the Greenway.

**SECTION IV. USES** - defines certain uses as either detrimental or having elements potentially detrimental to the community character of the Greenway

**SECTION V. DESIGN REVIEW** - establishes a requirement for review of development proposals by recognized neighborhood and Greenway organizations.

**SECTION VI. SPATIAL ENVELOPE** - defines where buildings and uses may be located to preserve access to daylight within the corridor and maintain appropriate activity relationships.

**SECTION VII. PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION** - guides construction of pedestrian ways on, or accesses from, adjacent land that create visual and physical interaction with the Greenway.

**SECTION VIII. OTHER SITE REQUIREMENTS** - establishes special standards for buffering and screening parking, loading, storage and trash disposal.

**SECTION IX. SIGNS** - recognizes the unique human environment of the Greenway and regulates commercial communication along it to facilitate spatial awareness of Greenway occupants.

**SECTION X. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS** - addresses the need to control activities (apart from property investments) on adjacent sites that may negatively impact enjoyment of the Greenway.



## ARTICLE XIV. MIDTOWN GREENWAY ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT

*(Text in italics indicates annotations which explain proposed ordinance provisions.)*

### SECTION I. PURPOSE

**551.1400. Purpose.** The Midtown Greenway Zoning Overlay District (MGZOD) is established to protect health, safety, and environmental quality for persons and property within and adjacent to the Midtown Greenway corridor. The Greenway is a former railroad right-of-way converted to a transit and recreation corridor. Its basic purpose is to connect people with natural amenities, neighborhoods, and social opportunities along its route. The provisions contained herein are intended to shape future development and transform existing development adjacent to the corridor in response to human occupancy of the Greenway space. They define acceptable and appropriate use, space, and activity relationships between adjacent sites and the Greenway so that its benefits to the community may be realized over time.

*(A statement of purpose which relates the ordinance to basic government functions of protecting life and property and identifies the particular needs or purposes pertaining to the Greenway corridor is a necessary foundation for all that is to follow.)*

### SECTION II. BOUNDARIES

**551.1410. Established boundaries.** The boundaries of the MGZOD shall be the areas shown on the official zoning map. While most provisions pertain to properties immediately adjacent to the Greenway, the boundaries generally extend from the Greenway right-of-way to the public streets (other than 27th Street east of Hiawatha Avenue and 29th Street west of Hiawatha Avenue) which run parallel to it, one block north and south of it.

**551.1411. Eligible boundaries.** Any person having a legal or equitable interest in property located adjacent to a pedestrian, bike, or transit corridor may file a petition to request addition of the MGZOD classification in the manner provided for zoning amendments in Chapter 525, Administration and Enforcement.

*(This provision allows property owners outside the district boundaries to seek application of its provisions to their properties if their properties are in physical circumstances similar to those along the Greenway.)*

**551.1412. Zoning Status.** Unless otherwise indicated, when applying the Zoning Code to parcels adjacent to the Greenway right-of-way, the zoning status of the Greenway right-of-way itself shall be construed as public open space in determining use compatibilities, buffers, etc.

*(Occasionally, zoning provisions stipulate that a certain land use may not be located next to another or that a special buffer must be provided by the more intense use. Defining the Greenway as public open space gives it the status of a park, rather than a public street in determining what may locate next to it and in what manner.)*



### SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

**551.1420. Definitions.** As used in this article, the following words and phrases shall mean:

*Greenway centerline:* The Greenway centerline shall be defined by the functional rather than purely geographic middle of the Greenway. Unless clearly indicated otherwise, the edge of the bicycle and pedestrian trails nearest the transit or rail portion of the corridor will be considered the Greenway centerline for the purposes of this ordinance.

*South Trail Edge:* The South Trail Edge shall be defined by the location of the southern most edge of the paved cycling and walking paths in the Greenway.

*(This definition supports later provisions which define acceptable building location and height relative to the pedestrian space within the Greenway. That space may not always extend to the geographic center of the Greenway, but is a very identifiable line to someone surveying a site adjacent to the Greenway for future development.)*

### SECTION IV. USES

**551.1431. Prohibited Uses.** Certain uses which may be permissible in the primary zoning districts abutting the Greenway are nonetheless considered incompatible by reason of their deleterious sensory impacts with the purpose and function of the Greenway as a human scale environment for both recreational and transit connection. Therefore, the following uses are prohibited on parcels that abut the Greenway right-of-way, notwithstanding their status within their primary zoning district:

Vehicle salvage yards	Industrial machinery sales, service and rental
Meat processing and packaging plants	Vehicle sales
Dry-cleaning plants	Self-service storage
General Industrial Uses (see section 550.30(f)(3))	Transportation uses
Foundries	Automobile Services
Rock crushing facilities	Parking ramps
Community correctional facilities	Drive-throughs
Off-sale liquor stores	

*(A list of prohibited uses need not identify every objectionable use imaginable. General zoning law stipulates that unless uses are expressly permitted, they are prohibited. In this case, the uses listed above are to some degree comprehended in the primary zoning districts adjacent to the Greenway. It is therefore necessary to expressly prohibit them in the overlay zone which will supersede the primary zoning districts.)*

**551.1435 Conditional Uses.** Certain uses which are permissible in the primary zoning districts abutting the Greenway nevertheless entail site activities which may either contribute to or detract from the function of the Greenway. Poor design or operation of these uses may create a nuisance or hazard for those within and along the Greenway corridor. In order to shape such site activities



in a manner most compatible with the Greenway, the following principal or accessory uses shall be regarded as conditional uses:

Uses which involve outdoor storage of material or merchandise  
Establishments conducting outdoor entertainment or instruction  
Establishments where liquor is sold.  
Shared parking lots and park and ride lots

*(A conditional use will be required to go through the conditional use permit process, including neighborhood review and comment. It should be noted that liquor establishments are licensed separately from beer and wine establishments. Restaurants serving beer and wine only would continue to be permitted uses.)*

## **SECTION V. DESIGN REVIEW**

**551.1440. Neighborhood Design Review.** When a site within the Greenway overlay zone is the subject of an application to the City for an approval comprehended under Title 20, the designated neighborhood citizen participation body (with at least one representative of the Midtown Greenway Coalition Board present) shall consider the proposed design prior to filing of an application to the Planning Commission. Minutes of the neighborhood organization meeting shall be submitted to both the Planning Commission and the applicant at least 14 days prior to consideration by the Planning Commission.

*(Title 20 is the portion of the City Code which includes Zoning, Sign, and Subdivision regulations. Anything significant enough to require Planning Commission or Council approval under those regulations will also be subject to review and comment by the neighborhood organization in whose territory the site is located. It is recommended that the Midtown Greenway Coalition also be notified as it is a citizen body which relates to the Greenway itself and also possesses expertise in evaluating and commenting on proposals near the Greenway.)*

**551.1441. Standards for Design Review.** With respect to the evaluation of individual site development proposals, the guiding principles from the *Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor Framework Plan* shall be the basis for evaluating the merits of the proposal. All adjacent development shall:

- 1) Reinforce safe environments
- 2) Be transit, pedestrian, and bicycle friendly
- 3) Establish links to transit and anticipate transit -oriented development
- 4) Foster a sense of place and community
- 5) Support a mix of uses that intensifies land use
- 6) Respect architectural form, scale and context
- 7) Incorporate environmentally sustainable practices
- 8) Support "greening" as a key component of corridor development projects
- 9) Balance economic vitality with quality of life
- 10) Target strategic public improvements to leverage private investment



*(While the standards outlined above do not contain clear, quantitative measures of performance, it is nevertheless possible for a group of people to render their individual and collective judgment as to whether a proposal does or does not conform to one or more of these standards. A recommendation by a neighborhood organization to deny a proposed use or a particular plan for a proposed use should cite failure to meet at least one of the standards above for its basis since they are contained in a policy document adopted by the City Council to guide development along the Greenway.)*

## **SECTION VI. SPATIAL ENVELOPE**

**551.1450. Location of Structures.** In order to fulfill the guiding principles of the Midtown Greenway Framework Plan, to protect life and property, to provide exposure to natural daylight along the pedestrian pathway, and to enhance social interaction along the Greenway, structures built on parcels adjacent to the Greenway after the adoption of this ordinance shall fit within the spatial envelope pertaining to its use (residential or non-residential) and position (north or south) relative to the Greenway. The four spatial envelopes within which adjacent structures and their constituent parts must fit are defined as follows:

*(The purpose statement of this very central provision of the overlay ordinance draws on the principles for design contained in the previous section and upon the basic purposes of the police power through which local governments may limit the use of property without compensation. A spatial envelope is an especially appropriate device for an overlay ordinance as it is anchored in protection and enhancement of the central element - the Greenway - and does not need to redefine all requirements of the primary zoning districts along it.)*

### **1. North Side**

**Residential Uses:** The height of the structure or any part of a structure, measured from the elevation of the Greenway centerline, shall not exceed 1.5 times the lateral distance from the centerline, provided that no part of the structure shall be within 15 feet of the Greenway north property line.

**Nonresidential Uses:** The height of the structure or any part of a structure, measured from the elevation of the Greenway centerline, shall not exceed 1.5 times the lateral distance from the centerline. Furthermore, nonresidential structures may not be set back more than 15 feet from the Greenway's north property line for more than 60% of the distance it forms a common property line with the site.

*(Height limits on the north side of the Greenway are fairly permissive, but not unlimited. Residential uses must be a minimum of 15 feet back from the property line, whereas commercial uses must be no more than 15 feet back for 40 percent of their abutment with the Greenway. This recognizes the preference of residential uses to have a buffer from the public realm while the converse is the preference for commercial uses. Keeping nonresidential buildings close to the Greenway enhances the prospect of eyes on the Greenway.)*



## 2. South Side

**Residential Uses:** The height of a residential structure, as measured from the elevation of the Greenway south trail edge, shall be no more than half the lateral distance from the south trail edge, provided that no part of the structure shall be within 15 feet of the Greenway south property line.

**Nonresidential Uses:** The height of a nonresidential structure, as measured from the elevation of the Greenway south trail edge, shall be no more than half the lateral distance from the south trail edge.

*(Height limits on the south side are more onerous to allow daylight to reach the pedestrian side of the Greenway. From the standpoint of the police power, it is the enhancement of visibility and therefore safety afforded by such a height restriction which is a proper zoning concern. Safety is also enhanced by sunlight melting snow and ice along the bike and pedestrian trails. The presence of a transit stop is a public benefit to adjacent land. Providing access to and from the transit stop is a purpose for requiring nonresidential buildings on adjacent land to build close to the property line and for providing building access at the elevation of the Greenway. Nevertheless, this ordinance section would require that their form step back from the right-of-way to maintain a path for daylight to reach the pedestrian side of the Greenway.)*

TABLE 1: Structure Spatial Envelopes Applied to Adjacent Sites/Uses (Ratios expressed as vertical distance over horizontal distance.)

	<u>Land</u>	<u>Use</u>
<u>Location</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Nonresidential</u>
North Side	1.5:1 slope measured from Greenway centerline, minimum 15' from north Greenway property line.	1.5:1 slope measured from Greenway centerline, maximum of 15' from north Greenway property line for 40% of site abutment.
South Side	1:2 slope measured from Greenway south trail edge, minimum 15' from south Greenway property line.	1:2 slope measured from south trail edge.

**551.1451. Density Credit for land dedication.** Owners of land parcels which abut the Greenway may (by easement or fee title) dedicate land adjacent to the Greenway for additional public open space use in return for a building envelope or land density credit (calculated from the applicable standard in the primary zoning district) for the use located on the remaining land. Credit applicable to all requirements affecting land use density (floor area ratio, units per acre) shall be equal to the twice the ratio of site area dedicated. Credit applicable to building envelope requirements (setback and building height) shall be four times the ratio of site area dedicated. Thus, dedication of 10% of the site area for adjoining open space shall qualify the site for a regulatory relief equal to 20% of the normal standard for land area/unit or Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R.), a 40% reduction in required setback from public right-of-way, and a 40% increase in the



allowable height. The minimum land area dedicated for this credit shall be 1,500 square feet. The property owner may propose and the City may accept an allocation of the allowable credits in a manner most appropriate to its site use and different from the base formula outlined above, provided that all standards of use compatibility are still met by the proposal. The credits and allowances contained herein shall in no way excuse a development governed by this overlay district from the limits established in section 551.1450.

*(The purpose of this provision is to encourage adjacent landowners to add to the public open space of the Greenway by allowing about twice the building space that would normally be achievable from the same area of land in private development. The density credits are taken from the primary zone restrictions, not from the overlay zone.)*

**551.1453. Parking credits.** Any commercial or industrial use which provides a bicycle or pedestrian access to its site from the Greenway shall be entitled to a 20% credit toward its parking requirement. If the use provides bicycle parking racks, a documented transportation demand management (TDM) plan for employee ridesharing, and is within 300 feet of a transit stop, it shall be entitled to a further reduction of up to 20% in the number of parking stalls normally required by this ordinance for such use.

*(This is a much stronger credit than allowed by the present ordinance -sec. 541.190 = 10%. It represents a serious orientation to mass- and human-powered transit, rather than mere lip service. However, it will need to be well documented before the full credit can be granted.)*

**551.1455. Building facade.** Other than one- and two-family dwellings, the facade of any building wall visible from the Greenway or from a site adjacent to the Greenway shall conform to the requirements of section 530.110 of the Zoning Ordinance. Where buildings have ground-level occupiable space at an elevation closer to the Greenway cycling and walking paths than the surrounding streets, at least one building entrance facing the Greenway shall be provided.

*(This provision is consistent with existing code and adds a requirement for building access to the Greenway where habitable space exists at that level. The purpose of this section is to foster visual and physical connection between the Greenway and adjacent sites to promote safety and social interaction.)*

## **SECTION VII. PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION**

**551.1460. Street-level pedestrian promenade.** In locations between Humboldt Avenue and Longfellow Avenue where a street level pedestrian promenade is comprehended by adopted City Plan, a property owner may dedicate to the City an easement not less than 12 feet in width for a public pedestrian way connected at the boundaries of the site to adjacent segments of that pedestrian promenade. Such dedication of space shall entitle the property owner to a density credit outlined in section 551.1451.

*(This provision treats space donated for the street-level pedestrian promenade the same as open space. By facilitating pedestrian movement along the Greenway corridor, some properties can*



*increase the flow of potential customers - who don't need a parking space - or neighbors that passively provide property surveillance as they pass by.)*

**551.1461. Private pedestrian connection.** Any private site or common area of a Planned Unit Development which abuts the Greenway may establish a pedestrian connection to the Greenway provided it is designed and constructed so as to prevent access by motorized private vehicles. Before constructing such a connection, the owner of the site shall first obtain an access permit from the Minneapolis Department of Public Works.

**551.1462. Walkway and stair connections.** Walkway and stair connections from adjacent sites into the Greenway are encouraged, subject to certain design requirements of the Uniform Building Code. Since such connections will extend into the Greenway right-of-way, no permit for such construction shall be issued without the consent of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.

*(The above two sections govern pedestrian connections between private sites and the Greenway. The first case does not require any construction within the Greenway right-of-way, merely an appropriate opening on to it - small enough to prevent motorized vehicles. The second case is that of a grade connection between street-level and Greenway level which occurs within the Greenway right-of-way itself. It is rare that such a stair would be constructed by private effort. However, because of the need to increase accessibility - not necessarily handicapped - between the street and the Greenway, a property owner who desires to construct such a connection on their own should only have to meet the requirements of the Building Code and the HCRRRA's policies for location in order to gain permission.)*

## **SECTION VIII. OTHER SITE REQUIREMENTS**

**551.1470. Buffer and screening requirements.** The following site activities are deemed to have a detrimental effect on the character of the Greenway corridor as a place for pedestrians and should wherever possible be located in yards other than along the Greenway. Such activities within yards abutting the Greenway right-of-way shall be completely screened if visible from the Greenway or from any parcel of land adjacent to the Greenway. Opaque or substantially opaque screening of these activities by walls, fences, or vegetation is required in accordance with section 530.169 of this ordinance. A minimum 10' buffer strip shall be established along the property line abutting the Greenway. The following activities shall not be allowed within the buffer strip which must be landscaped. Screening of outdoor parking, driving, and loading areas shall include shade trees not more than 25 feet apart and shrubs to screen vehicles to a height of 3 feet above the grade of the parking surface. The site activities include:

Parking and driving areas  
Outdoor storage of material or merchandise  
Exterior docks and bays for loading and unloading  
Trash disposal facilities  
Mechanical equipment (such as air handling units)



*(The above section is a consolidation of what requires buffering and screening and establishes 10 feet as the minimum buffer width. This slightly exceeds the current ordinance standard which is generally 6 to 8 feet in width. It also establishes a requirement for total screening of certain activities, not token window dressing. It is a very high standard in keeping with an understanding that the Greenway is now public open space, not an industrial alley.)*

**551.1472. Placement of fences, hedges, or walls.** Fences, hedges or walls shall not impede visibility of the Greenway from the site except as necessary to screen an outdoor parking, loading, or storage area. Screening of outdoor human activities such as dining and entertainment need only be sufficient to indicate the limits of public space.

*(While fences, hedges, and walls accomplish the public purpose of screening certain unsightly activities from the Greenway, they can also violate the public purpose of necessary access or visual connection between public spaces or between certain private spaces and public space. Unnecessary screening is therefore discouraged.)*

## **SECTION IX. SIGNS**

**551.1480. Signs.** It is recognized that signs inform users of the Greenway of their location and therefore contribute to spatial awareness and empowerment. Nevertheless, the Greenway is not a commercial corridor and buildings which have no direct physical connection to the Greenway have no need to communicate more than essential information to the Greenway space. Therefore, no freestanding identification sign of any adjacent site shall be placed in a yard abutting the Greenway. Identification signs and building addresses placed on walls facing the Greenway shall not exceed 18" in height, unless the establishment chooses to open a public entrance facing onto the Greenway. In such cases, wall and projecting signs are permitted on the same basis as are allowed on walls facing public streets in the applicable primary zoning district. Signs may be internally lit, but not flashing. No off-premise signs shall be placed in yards or on walls or roofs visible from the Greenway. Directional signs shall be limited to indication of a building entrance.

*(The Greenway is a unique space with unique needs for visual communication. People who can identify where they are better able to get help or directions than if they can only see blank walls and street markers too small to read from more than 30 feet away. Limiting the height of identification sign letters to 18 inches provides necessary legibility without much room for in-your-face advertising. Since there is no auto traffic to appeal to, there is no need for freestanding pylon signs or billboards in yards facing the Greenway. Again, the character of the Greenway is that of public open space, not the Las Vegas strip. Businesses with Greenway building access would enjoy normal sign privileges on those facades.)*

## **SECTION X. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

**551.1491. Noise emissions.** The Greenway is a public open space. To insure the safety of its occupants, acceptable noise levels at the adjoining property line shall not exceed the level allowed adjacent to other public open spaces in the city.

*(This section utilizes a performance zoning approach to determine acceptable noise levels. Noise regulations are minimally stated in chapter 389 of the City Code. It is recommended that*



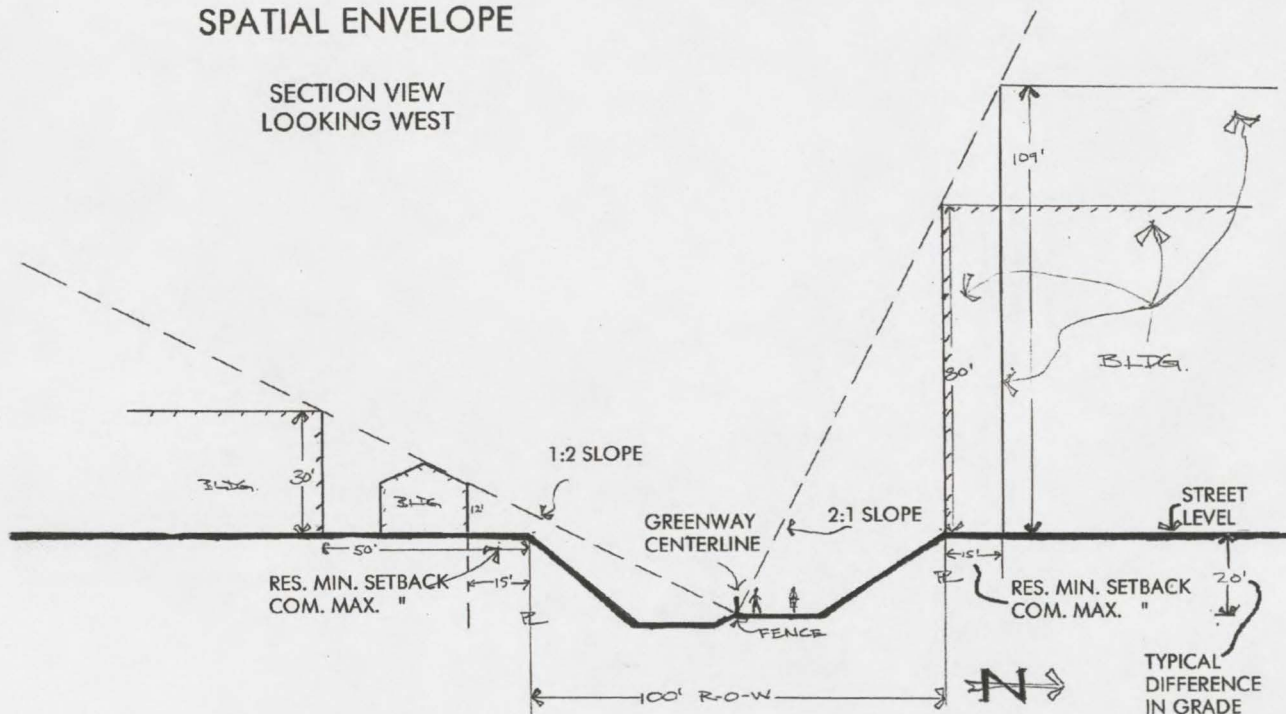
*the City adopt a comprehensive noise policy which defines acceptable ambient noise levels by zoning or land use classification. The need to be heard in the outdoor environment is a matter of safety and livability for neighborhoods.)*

**551.1492. Drainage.** Adjacent sites and buildings shall be designed and constructed so that stormwater drains away from the Greenway. Where a site is modified to create outdoor space adjacent to, or extending into, the Greenway, a rainwater garden or other effective vegetated filter strip shall be installed in accordance with Best Management Practices and with the policies of the governing Watershed District.

*(There is no storm sewer in the Greenway at present. Previously, all development adjacent to the rail corridor was required to shed water away from it. If new development brings human occupancy to the edge of the Greenway, it will also likely bring the potential for runoff. In some cases, it may be possible to use drains connected to storm sewer lines under adjacent streets. In cases where this is not possible or not desirable, installation of a well designed vegetative filter strip should be sufficient to meet Watershed requirements for water quality and runoff attenuation during moderate storm events.)*



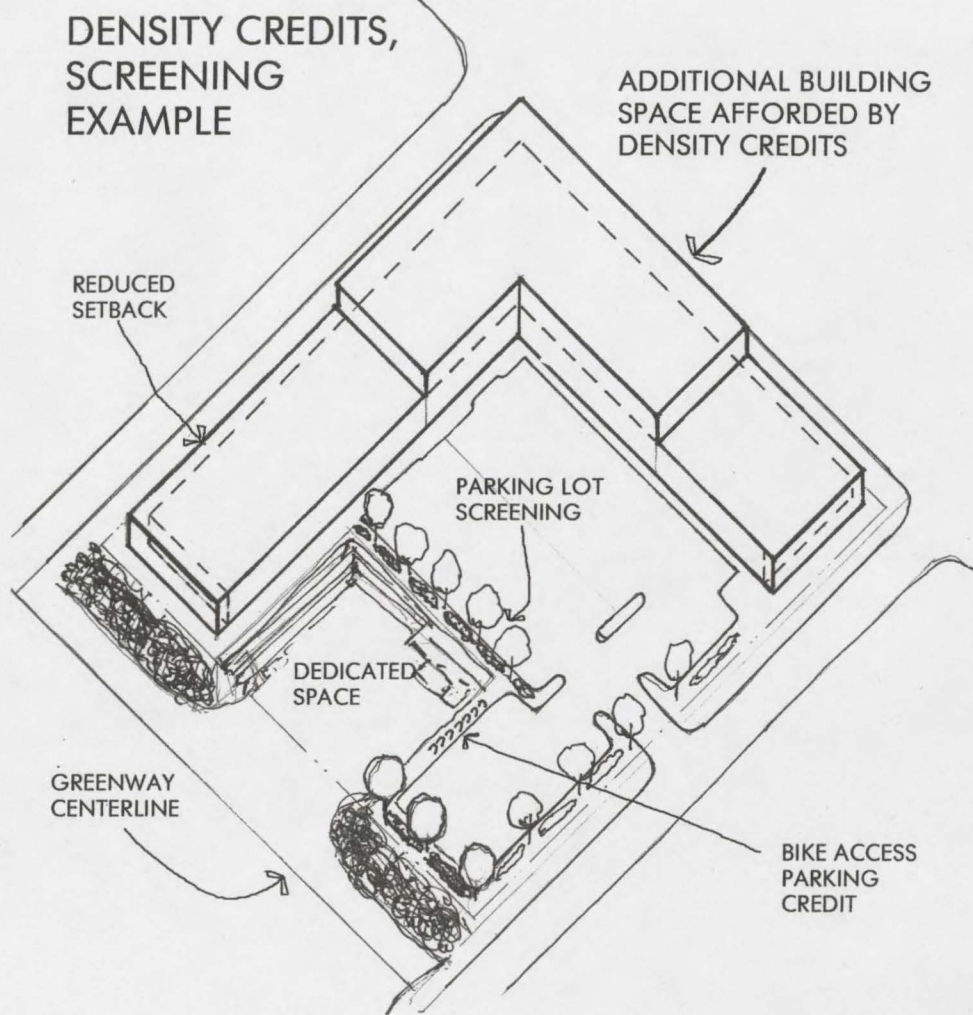
SECTION VIEW  
LOOKING WEST



### Spatial Envelope Diagram

*This diagram supports proposed section 551.1450 which establishes setbacks and height limitations for structures within the Midtown Greenway overlay zone. What the diagram shows is that the spatial envelope emanates from the functional centerline of the Greenway. This is defined as the edge of the trail portion closest to the transit or rail portion of the Greenway, or the south trail edge when addressing buildings on the south side of the corridor along Greenway segments where the trails are in the southern half of the corridor. The spatial envelope limits structures heights to the south of the south trail edge beneath an imaginary plane rising from the south trail edge one foot vertically for every two feet of horizontal distance from the centerline (slope = 1:2). To the north of the centerline, the slope of the imaginary plane is different. On this side, structures may not pierce an imaginary plane which rises two feet vertically for every foot of horizontal distance from the centerline (slope = 2:1).*

## EXHIBIT B



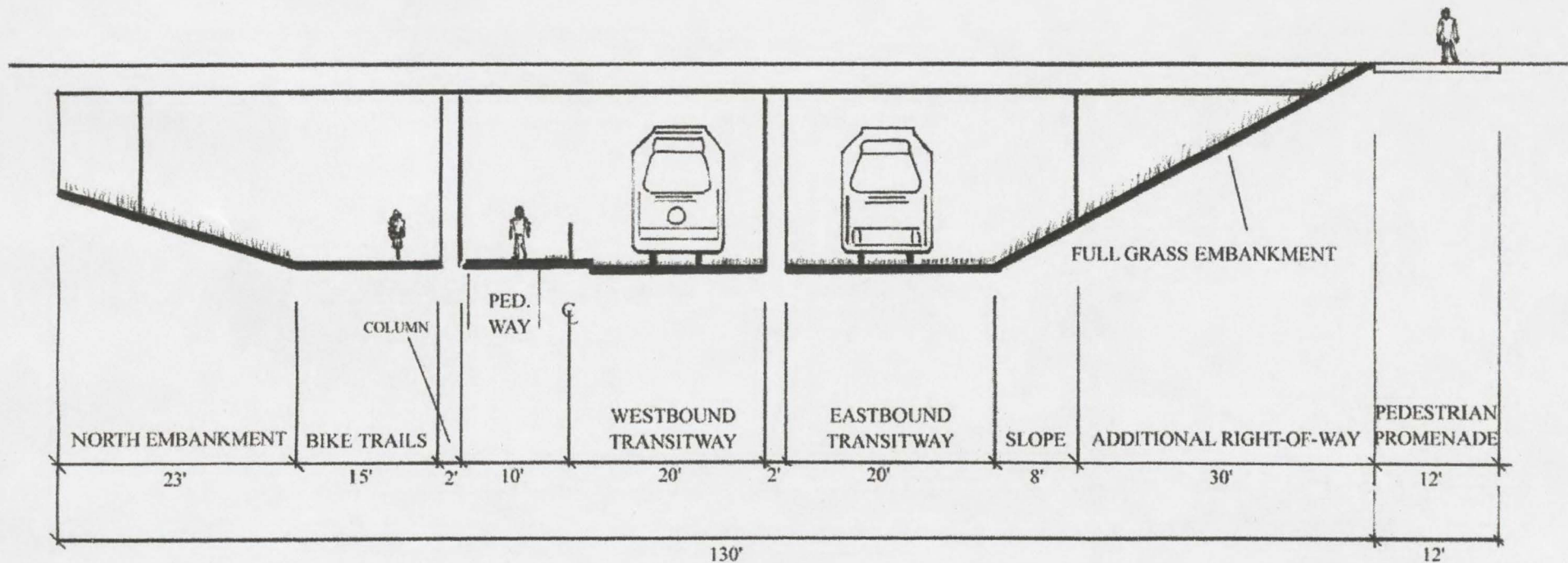
### *Density Credits and Screening (axonometric drawing):*

The proposed ZOD contains a number of provisions in which density credits are offered. These include credits in exchange for land dedications for open space or for pedestrian ways. In effect, a density credit is also available in the form of a parking credit where adjacent sites provide direct access from the trail portion of the Greenway and/or if they are within 300 feet of a transit stop and have in place a Transportation Demand Management Plan. The simple graphic above shows a site layout where additional building space can be comprehended where bicycle access and an open space dedication combine to reduce parking and setback requirements. Every circumstance is different. In general, however, sites which offer such benefits to Greenway users will be allowed to construct more building space by going higher than normally allowed, building closer to the street, and having to devote less space for parking for each 1000 square feet of building space than would normally be the case.



## PHASE ONE/ TRENCH SECTION

### WIDENED RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR GRASS EMBANKMENT

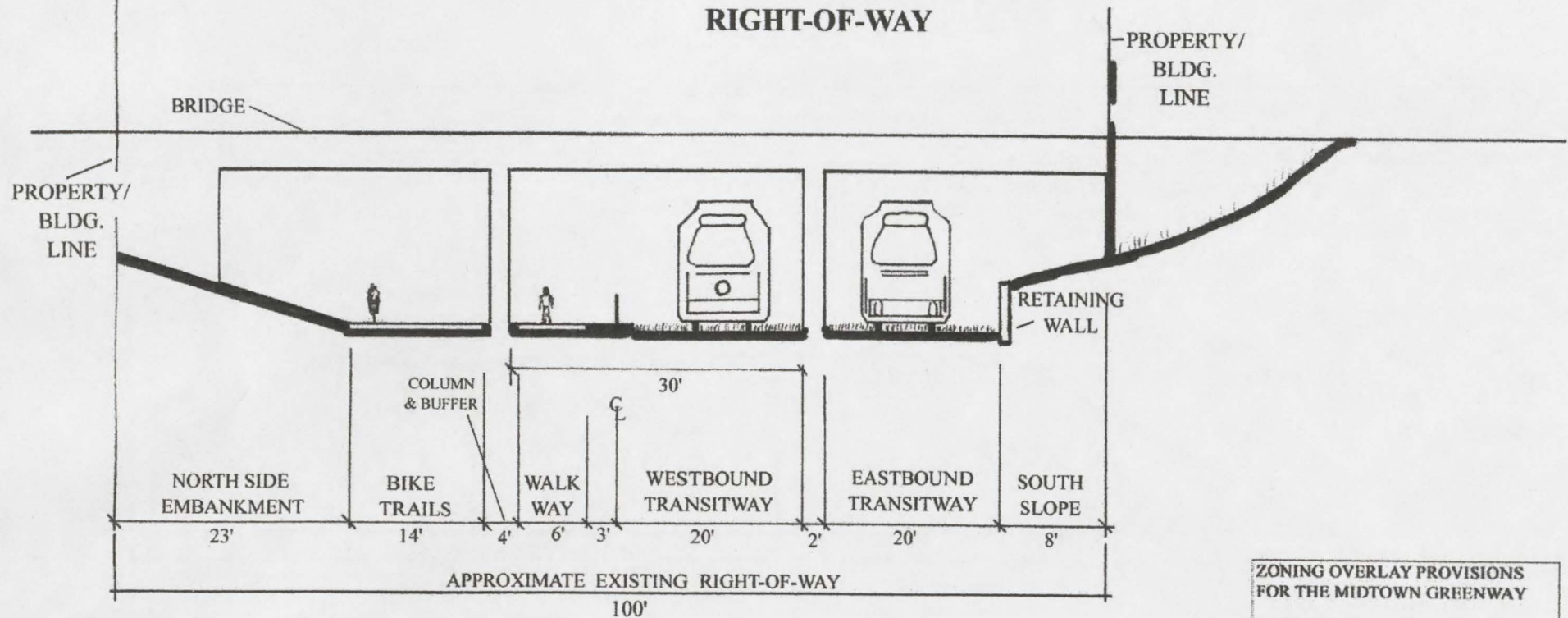


ZONING OVERLAY PROVISIONS  
FOR THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY

PROPOSED BY:  
MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

DRAWN BY GARY SHALLCROSS,  
PLANNING INTERN  
AUG. 25, 2001

# PHASE ONE/ TRENCH SECTION TWO WAY TRANSIT WITHOUT WIDENING OF GREENWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY



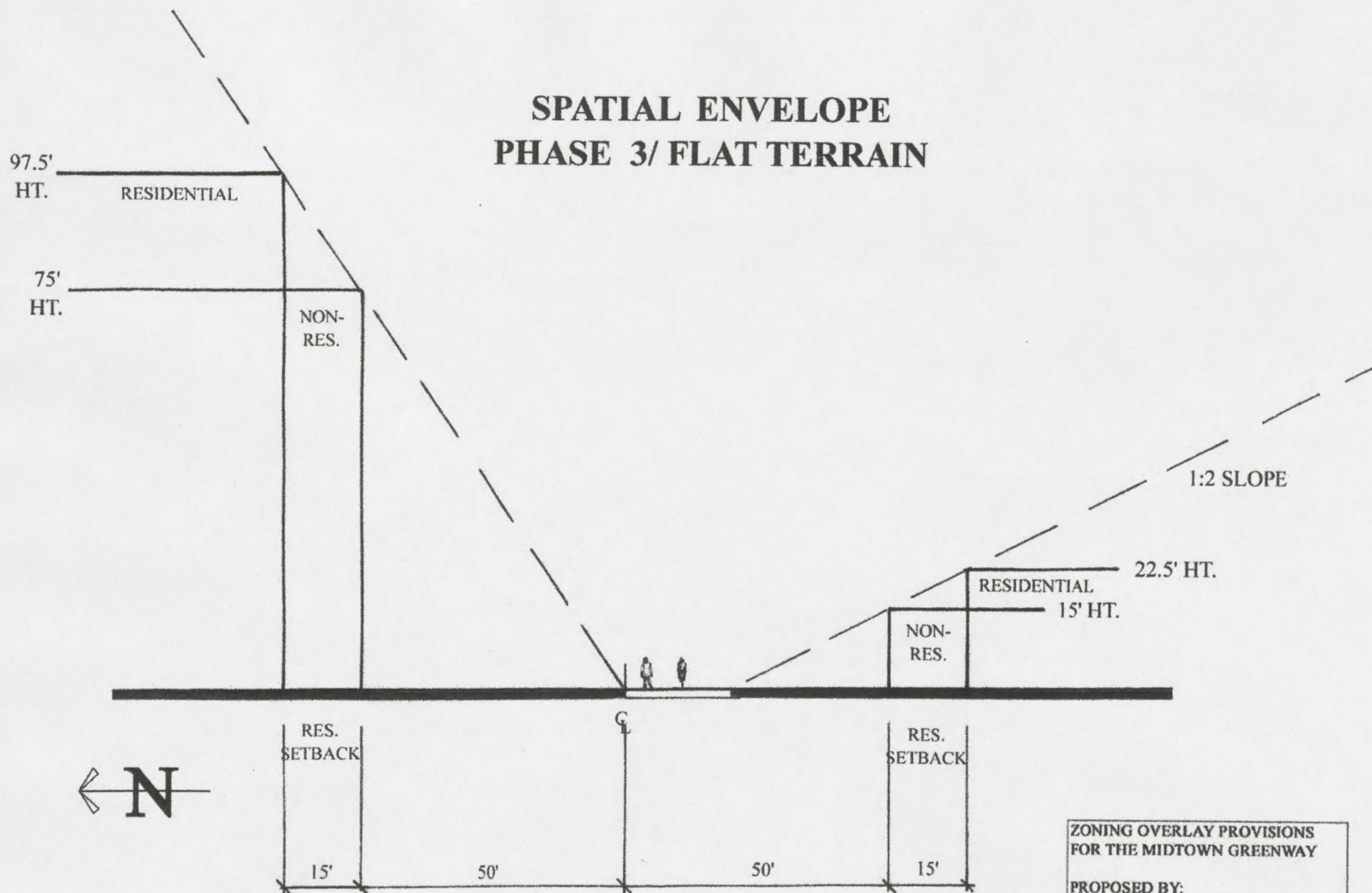
ZONING OVERLAY PROVISIONS  
FOR THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY

PROPOSED BY:  
MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

DRAWN BY GARY SHALLCROSS,  
PLANNING INTERN  
AUG. 25, 2001



## SPATIAL ENVELOPE PHASE 3/ FLAT TERRAIN

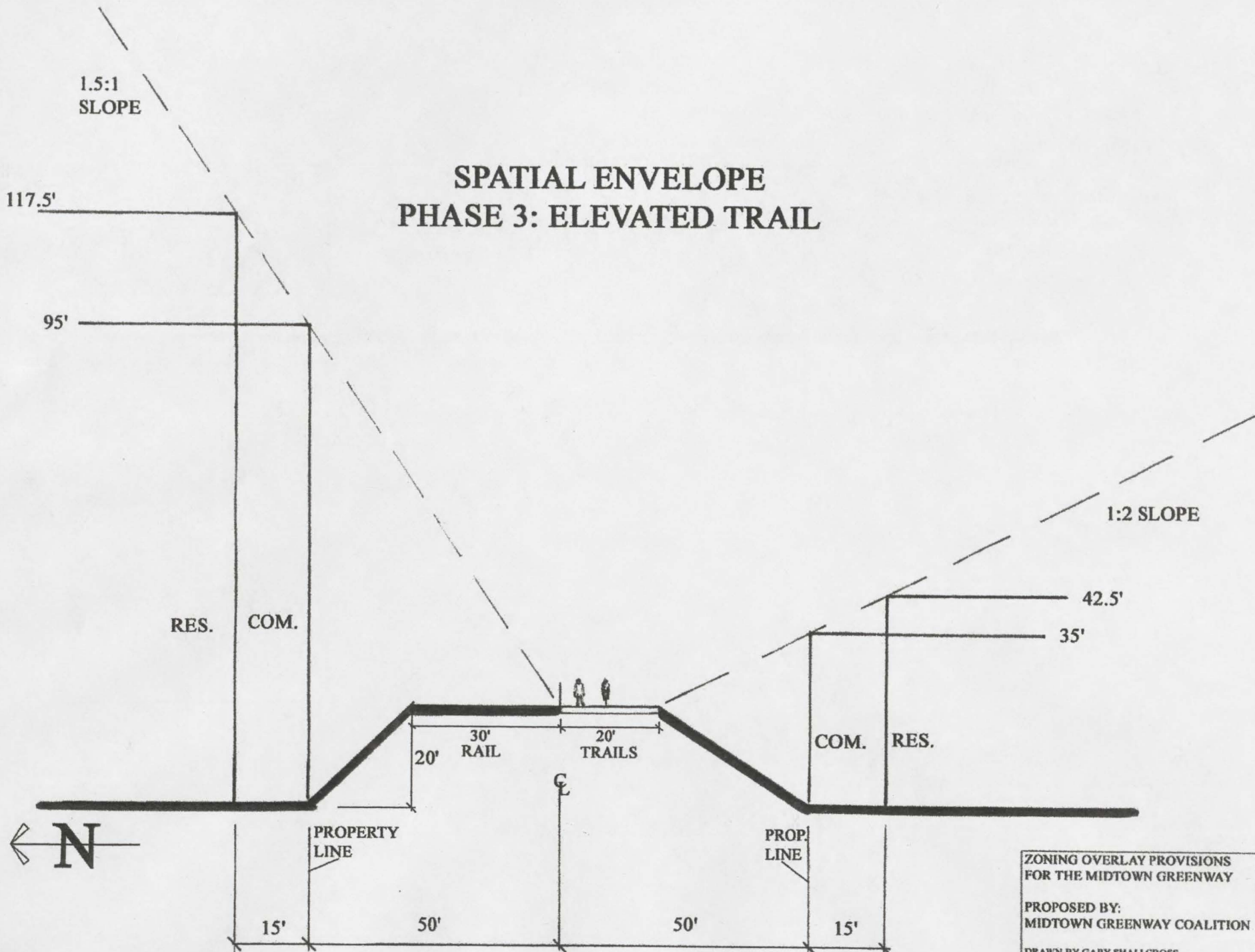


ZONING OVERLAY PROVISIONS  
FOR THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY

PROPOSED BY:  
MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

DRAWN BY GARY SHALLCROSS,  
PLANNING INTERN  
AUG. 25, 2001

# SPATIAL ENVELOPE PHASE 3: ELEVATED TRAIL



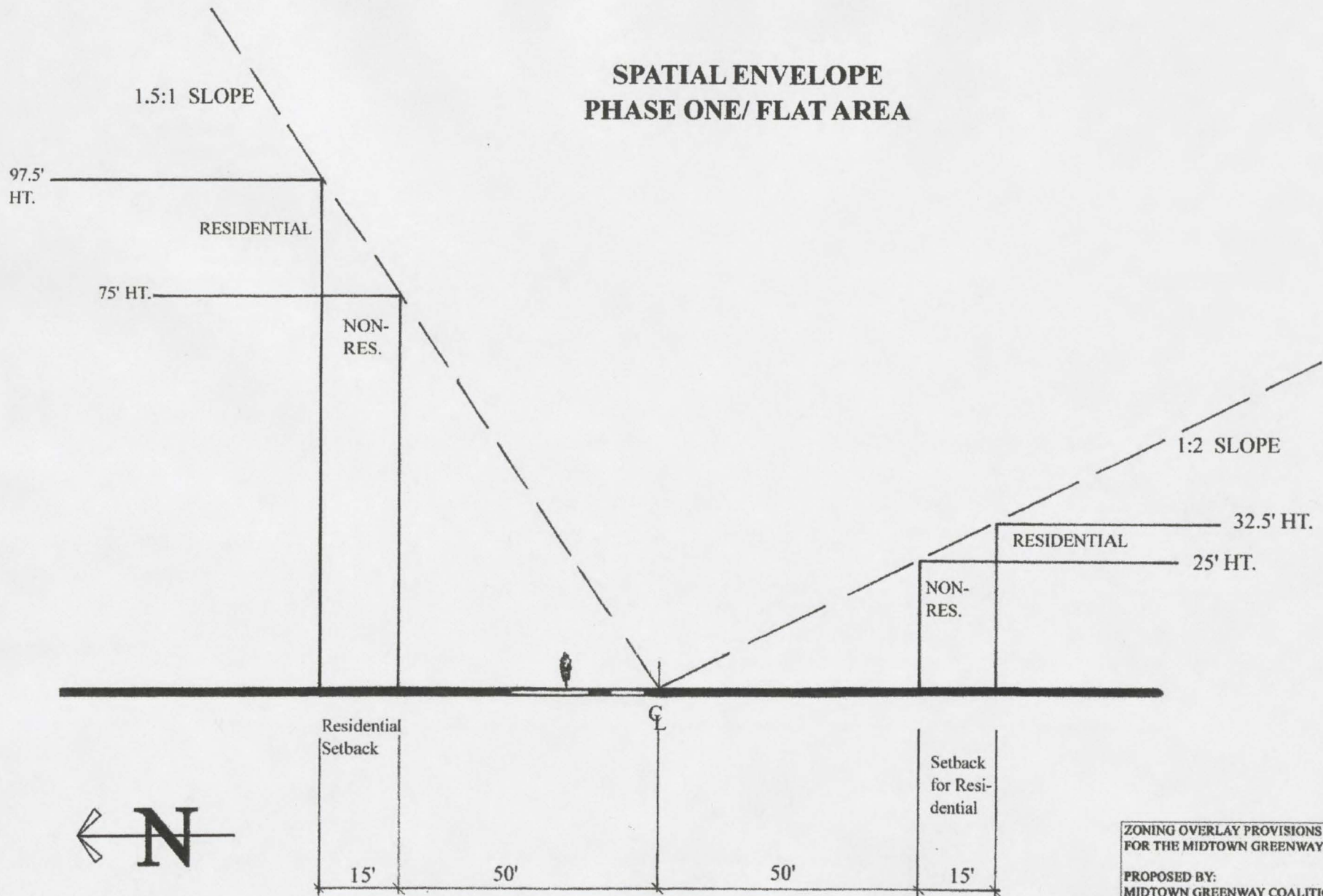
ZONING OVERLAY PROVISIONS  
FOR THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY

PROPOSED BY:  
MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

DRAWN BY GARY SHALLCROSS,  
PLANNING INTERN  
AUG. 25, 2001



**SPATIAL ENVELOPE  
PHASE ONE/ FLAT AREA**



ZONING OVERLAY PROVISIONS  
FOR THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY

PROPOSED BY:  
MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

DRAWN BY GARY SHALLCROSS,  
PLANNING INTERN  
AUG. 25, 2001